

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE BENEFITS OF SURRENDER

Pastor Mickey Stonier – December 14, 2014

This Sunday Pastor Mickey talked about growing up with fear and anxiety fueled by the loss of his mother and sister. Believers can fight against worry by making trust in God and the kingdom of God a chief priority.

MEMORY VERSES

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Matthew 6:33-34

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Do you consider yourself a worrier? What are some things that currently cause you to stress and worry. Why?
- What negative effects have worries had on your health? Your thoughts? Your productivity? Your relationships with others?

The presence or absence of worry measures our trust in God. As believers, we aspire to a single focus on God and a loyalty toward Him. In this passage, Jesus taught that worry is unproductive. Not only is it unproductive, it's the opposite of trust in God.

STUDY QUESTIONS

→ Read Matthew 6:25-27

- Do you consider worry a sin? Explain your answer.
- According to these verses, what are three specific reasons Jesus gives us for not worrying about the basic needs of life?
- What's required for us to take seriously Jesus' instruction not to worry about the necessities of life?



- When we worry, what are we saying about our view of God and our relationship with Him?

Leader's Note: *In verse 25, Jesus asked rhetorically, "Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing?" Is the only source for fulfillment and meaning to our lives what we eat and what we wear? Of course not. Jesus is establishing the fact that worry is illogical for the child of God. If God is the Creator of the world, including us, then will He not also provide for our needs?*

→ **Read Matthew 6:28-32**

- What additional reasons for not worrying do you take away from these verses?

Leader's Note: *Faith calls for trust in a loving and personal God at work in the world. Worry shows a lack of trust. Jesus' teaching by no means ignores the reality of poverty and hunger among the people of the earth. However, Jesus' clear teaching for believers is to trust God above all. If the Lord faithfully provides for the needs of mere creatures, how much more will He provide for us—His children?*

- Is it practical to depend on God for vital necessities like food and clothing? Share an experience when God provided such things.
- Trusting God with everything is easier said than done. What spiritual disciplines—such as prayer, worship, study, fasting, and so forth—have you found helpful for fighting worry?
- Why do praising God and giving thanks undermine worry?

→ **Read Matthew 6:33-34**

- Practically speaking, what does it mean to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"?
- How have you seen Jesus' statement in verse 33 proven true in your life?

Leader's Note: *Jesus encourages us to rest in our positions in God's kingdom (vv. 31-34) instead of being consumed by worry and fear. First, remember that God loves as a Father loves. We should not think of God as far away and unapproachable or even as a king who is not accessible. As our Father, God loves and cares for us. Second, God is personal; we have a personal relationship with Him. Finally, as both God and Father, He knows that we need the basics of life.*



Christians never have to worry about whether God knows or cares about their needs. Instead of worrying, believers can seek the kingdom of God and trust Him. We can focus on living out His mission. If His will is our priority, we will be less concerned about material matters and more committed to eternal relationships.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

- What are some ways to keep the work of Christ central to your thinking as you try to seek His kingdom first?

Pray that the work of Christ would overwhelm all lesser concerns, and that joy and abundant life would define the lives of those in the church.

TAKE IT HOME!

Make a list of the things you came up with the “Put it into Practice” section and review them daily. Keep a journal of how you saw God at work changing your motives and fears into trust and seeking him first.

